UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/45/994
S/22481
11 April 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 28
THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 9 April 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the Initiative for Total Peace in Guatemala issued yesterday by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Jorge Serrano Elías. This Initiative presents the position of the Government of Guatemala regarding the process of national reconciliation, and reiterates its interest in continuing to be able to count on the valuable presence of the Observer designated by you.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Francisco VILLAGRAN DE LEON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Initiative for Total Peace in Guatemala issued in Guatemala on 8 April 1991 by the President of Guatemala

Under the terms of the Constitution, the Government of the Republic is required to establish conditions which will guarantee to all Guatemalans, without discrimination in any form, life, liberty, justice, security, peace and the all-round development of the individual.

In this context, the Government will continue its efforts to search for peace in the spirit of the Esquipulas Agreements and in conformity with the Oslo Agreement, the terms of which it recognizes and fully respects.

In addition, the Government is mindful of the final declarations of the meetings held at El Escorial, Ottawa, Quito, Metepec and Atlixco, at which the various social sectors in the country, including the insurgent movement, voiced the national consensus regarding the need to find a political solution to the armed struggle and simultaneously to promote, within the framework of law, actions conducive to the further improvement of Guatemalan democracy.

Lastly, the process of democratization taking place in the country has opened up opportunities for free political participation by all sectors, with no marginalization, and accordingly the use of violence is now unjustified as a means of influencing decisions of State.

The content of the peace

We aspire to a total and lasting peace, which means not merely a cease-fire, but in addition laying the foundations for the reconciliation and harmonious coexistence of the Guatemalan family, based on the following fundamental postulates:

First: Termination of the armed struggle

An end needs to be put to the armed struggle which has devastated the country for more than 30 years, leaving in its wake poverty, death, orphanhood, widowhood, grief, suffering and insecurity among all sectors of the Guatemalan people.

To attain this end, the insurgent action must be completely ended as a result of serious negotiations which will lead to the drawing up of timetables, programmes and procedures that will make it possible to ensure that the fronts and mechanisms of subversion are dismantled so that the counterinsurgency operations can be discontinued.

Parallel with this, efforts will be made to ensure that the conditions prevail which will enable all Guatemalans, specifically including those fellow citizens who were involved in subversive activities, to enjoy fully the rights embodied in the Political Constitution of the Republic and to guarantee the populations uprooted by the violence and the security required for their reintegration into social and political life within the framework of law.

Second: Greater economic and social equity

The need is recognized to expand and strengthen the programmes the Government of the Republic is conducting in order to overcome the conditions of extreme poverty and destitution in which large sectors of our population are living, support the modernization of our economy and provide solutions to the urgent problems of communication, education, health and social welfare and security.

With the ending of the armed struggle, the Government of the Republic will be able to devote more resources to dealing with the serious imbalances prevailing in the country, which give rise to serious social tensions and whose solution is a necessary corollary of the economic and social rights of all human beings, a condition for genuine democracy and a guarantee of the preservation of peace.

Total peace cannot exist without social peace, and for this to be attained the State needs to strengthen the underpinnings of the common welfare.

Third: Respect for and strengthening of the rule of law

The rule of law requires that all inhabitants of the country should align their conduct with the law. The State needs to strengthen the juridical system in order to achieve greater levels of security for individuals and their property, and of respect for human rights.

Total peace can be perpetuated and strengthened only if there exists a genuine regime of law in which the legislation applies fully and equally to all.

Fourth: Intensification of the democratic process

Despite the undeniable progress achieved in the establishment of democracy as a political system and a mode of social coexistence, there is nevertheless a need to intensify still further the action to improve it by strengthening democratic institutions and free, informed and organized participation by the entire population in the ongoing decision-making process through administrative decentralization, strengthening of local authorities and revival of Mayan cultural values.

PROCEDURES FOR ACHIEVING PEACE

First: Definition of the terms of the "total peace" agreement

In line with the spirit and the letter of the Oslo Agreement, it is proposed that meetings should be held as early as possible, and at the latest by 20 April 1991, for the purpose of defining and drawing up solutions that will lead to the preparation of the total peace agreements.

For these meetings to be successful, an atmosphere of privacy and discretion is called for in the discussions at this stage so as to ensure a mature, serious and flexible approach which is not exposed to sectarian pressures or to public confrontation alien to the highest national interests, which might impair the good will of those participating in the process of the search for peace. Nevertheless, by common accord, public opinion will be kept informed of the progress made.

For such meetings, the Government insists on being able to count on the invaluable services of the National Reconciliation Commission and the Conciliator, Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruño, and on the valuable presence of the Observer designated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Francesc Vendrell.

Second: Meeting for the signature of the "total peace" agreements

On the satisfactory conclusion of the negotiating process that will lead to the preparation of the final total peace agreements, these will be signed at Oslo, on the kind invitation of the Government of Norway, or at any other place mutually agreed upon.

As Constitutional President of the Republic, I place on record my desire to be present on that historic occasion.